been opened for operation of foreign tourist Charters flights. There is already an 'open sky policy' with regard to cargo flights from India.

Air connectivity in NER

2562. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state the action taken on each of the recommendations under PM's Special initiative for development of Air Connectivity and infrastructure in the NER?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): In pursuance of the Prime Minister's "New Initiatives for the North-Eastem Region" S. P. Shukla Commission was constituted and the action taken on the recommendations of the commission are as under:—

(i) Guwahati Airport has been declared as International Airport and was upgraded to serve as a regional hub by completing the expansion/ modification of the terminal building and extension of apron. Strengthening of runway at the airport for B-747 operations is in progress and is likely to be completed by December, 2001. Works relating to extension of runway upto 12000 ft. and associated facilities have also been taken up. Cargo complex facility has been established at Guwahati Airport for handling perishable goods. Permission for limited export of cargo from Guwahati has also been granted. Further, the required land for construction of a full-fledged international Cargo Complex has already been acquired;

(ii) Pawan Hans Helicopters Limited have submitted a proposal to the Government of Arunachal Pradesh for taking over the part of air maintenance task in the state from Indian Air Force. The proposal is stilt under consideration of the State Government.

(iii) The Government has decided to treat the Aviation Turbine Fuel provided to Turbo-Prop aircraft as a "declared good" under the Central Sales Tax Act, 1956 to cap the sales Tax at 4%. Necessary action for legislation is in progress; and

(iv) Government has also decided to exempt all routes within North-East Region from the levy of Inland Air Travel Tax (IATT).